

Rurouni Kenshin



Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki

volume

10



和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI



VIRTUAL MEIJI

WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTER FOR "IMAGINATIVE," VIRTUAL MEIJI IN KANJI IS "KASÔ MEIJI"—A PHRASE FOUND IN A REVIEW OF "RUIROKEN" I HAPPENED TO COME ACROSS IN A BOOKSTORE. "WHAT A GREAT TURN OF PHRASE!" I THOUGHT, IMPRESSED, AND THIS WAS FREED OF AT LEAST ONE CONCERN. A MANGA SERIES THAT DOESN'T HIT READERS OVER THE HEADS WITH MEIJI HISTORY, BUT ONE THAT'S HIGHLY ENJOYABLE... THAT ALLOWS ITS FANS TO LIVE A LITTLE OF THE MEIJI ERA EVERY TIME THEY READ IT... THAT IS "RUIROUNI KENSHIN."

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 10: MITSURUGI, MASTER AND STUDENT
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
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PARENTAL ADVISORY
RUROUNI KENSHIN is rated T+ for Older Teen.
It contains violence, alcohol, and tobacco usage.
It is recommended for ages 16 and up.



SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin

MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY
Vol. 10: MITSURUGI, MASTER AND STUDENT



STORY AND ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

Arai Seiku



新井青空

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *ruouni*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.



Iori

THUS FAR

Ōkuho Toshimichi, head of the government's "Internal Affairs," tries to hire Kenshin to assassinate Shishio Makoto, the successor to "Hitokiri Battōsai." But it is Ōkuho who is assassinated, and Kenshin sets out for Kyoto to find his killers... despite the protests of Kaoru and the others. On the East Sea Road, he meets a girl named Misao and travels with her to a village occupied by Shishio's men—where he reconnects with Saitō Hajime, an intelligence agent for the police and ex-member of the Shinsengumi. There, they encounter Shishio himself, but the assassin refuses to fight Kenshin (because he is no longer *hitokiri*) and vanishes. Behind him Shishio leaves Sōjirō—the "Sword of Heaven"—to fight, and Kenshin's *sakabatō* is shattered.

Arriving in Kyoto, Kenshin asks Okina (Misao's surrogate father, and ex-Oniwabanshū) to find the swordsmith, Arai Shakkū. But Shakkū is dead, and the son who inherited his skills desires only peace and has abandoned the making of blades. Now Kenshin must search elsewhere for a new *sakabatō*, but his meeting with Shakkū's son—and the existence of Shakkū's last sword—have been found out by Shishio's men....



Kamiya Kaoru

神谷薫



Myojin Yahiko

明神弥彦



"Sword-Hunter" Chō

翁 柏崎 全至

Okina (Kashiwazaki Yonji)

刀狩の張



Himura Kenshin (Hitokiri Battōsai)

緋村 剣心



Makimachi Misao

巻町 操



Shishio Makoto

志々雄 真実

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Act 76

The Ten Swords in Action



SEIKŪ,
HOWEVER,
CLAIMS HE NOW
LIVES FOR PEACE
AND REFUSES TO
CRAFT ANOTHER
WEAPON.

FFFWAP

KENSHIN,
SEEKING A NEW
SAKABATŌ, HAS
APPROACHED
SEIKŪ, THE SON
OF ARAI SHAKKŪ.



前回のあすび
請読巻町探

"STORY THUS FAR" WITH
MAKIMACHI MISAO

...WALKS
AWAY TO
RESUME HIS
SEARCH FOR A
SAKABATŌ, FROM
THE START.



KENSHIN,
ASHAMED
AT ASKING
HIM TO
FORGE A
BLADE...

IF WE'D
PUSHED
HARDER,
WE
COULD'VE
MADE HIM
DO IT!

THAT GUY
WAS A
WEAKLING!!
DIDN'T YOU
SEE HOW HE
LOOKED?!



AGH!!
YOU'RE TOO
NICE!!



SEIKŪ-DONO'S
LIFE IS NOT
TO BE
OVERTURNED
FOR THIS
ONE'S ENDS.

THAT'S
WHAT I
MEAN!
YOU'RE
TOO NICE!

TSK

NO.

KOP

...MAY
MEAN
HIMURA-
KUN'S
DEATH.

SETA SŌJIRO
ALREADY
BROKE ONE
SAKABATŌ. TO
FACE HIM OR
SHISHIO
AGAIN...

...WHAT
SORT OF
BLADE
WOULD IT BE
WITHOUT
THE MAKER'S
HEART?

EVEN
IF WE
FORCED
HIM TO
MAKE IT...





...WHAT
A STUPID
GIRL I
HAVE
RAISED.

IF YOU
CAN'T
FIGURE
THAT MUCH
OUT...

SIGH

A
SAKABATŌ
THAT IS
SAKABATŌ
IN SHAPE
ALONE IS
NOTHING!



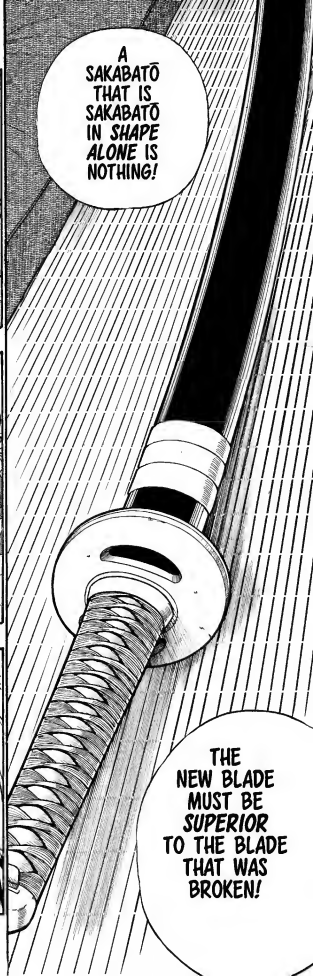
HE'S
GOTTA
HAVE A
SWORD
!!

SO WHAT
DO WE
DO?!

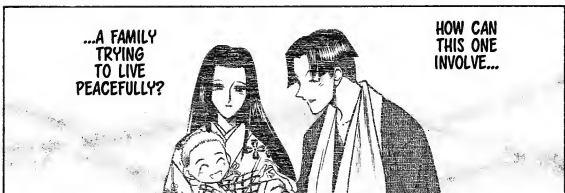
GRR!

YANK!

WE
WILL SEEK
EVERY
SWORD-
SMITH
IN KYOTO
UNTIL...

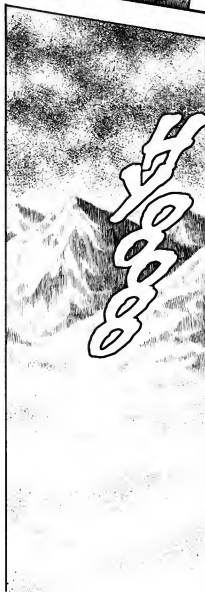


THE
NEW BLADE
MUST BE
SUPERIOR
TO THE BLADE
THAT WAS
BROKEN!





CAN'T YOU
AT LEAST
GET OUT OF
YOUR OWN
HEAD WHILE
WE TALK
ABOUT YOU?!



NOHA

HIMURA
!!

-RO
?





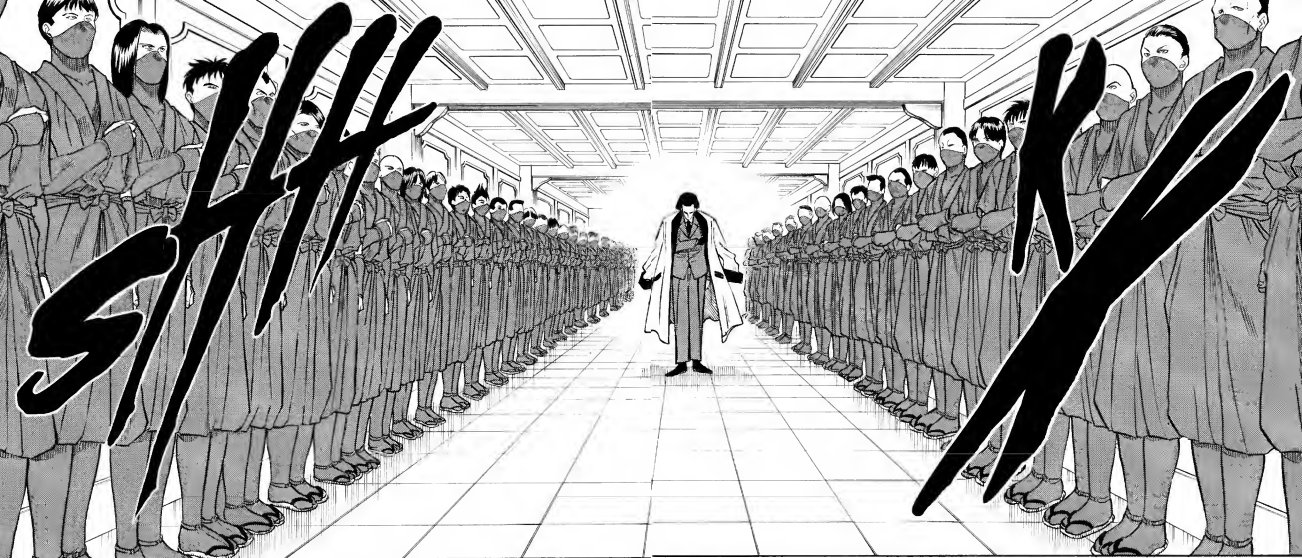
IT'S ONLY
FOR TWO
OR THREE
MORE
MONTHS.
BE TOUGH.

DON'T
COMPLAIN.
IT'S WELL-
BUILT
INSIDE.

KYOTO
FLOURISHING
ALL AROUND
US...AND
WE'RE GOING
INTO THE
CAVE AGAIN.

BUT...





YES. THE
FIREARMS HAVE
BEEN ACQUIRED.

HAVE YOU
FINISHED
THE JOB I
LEFT YOU?

I AM HAVING
HIM GATHER THE
TEN SWORDS IN
THE EAST. MANY
THERE ARE LIKE
ANJI—HARD TO
TRACK DOWN.

I'VE
PERSONALLY
SENT NOTICE
TO THOSE IN
THE WEST.

WHERE
IS...
SŌJIRO?

QUITE AN
EXTRAVAGANT
WELCOME.

...SHI-
SHIO-
SAMA.

WELCOME
BACK...

...HŌJI.

...WE WILL
BEGIN THE
TAKING
OF THIS
NATION.

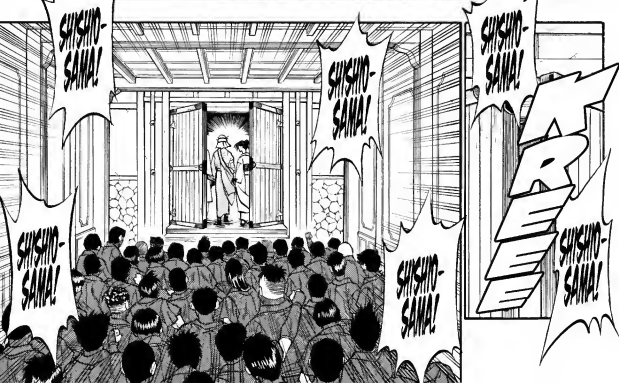
AS
SOON
AS THE
JUPPON-
GATANA
UNITE...

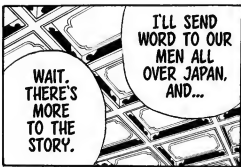




LET EACH
AND EVERY ONE
OF YOU BE
PREPARED!

COMRADES,
DO YOU HEAR?!!
THE TIME
FOR THE
REVOLUTION
IS NIGH!!





WAIT,
THERE'S
MORE
TO THE
STORY.

I'LL SEND
WORD TO OUR
MEN ALL
OVER JAPAN,
AND...



IT
SEEMED
ABOUT RIGHT
FOR THE
"LOYAL
NUMBER
TWO MAN."

"COMRADES,
DO YOU
HEAR"?

A BIT
DRAMATIC,
WASN'T
IT?



THEY'LL BE
THIRSTING
FOR BLOOD
AFTER SUCH
A LONG
DROUGHT
OF PEACE.

IT WILL
TAKE A
WHILE
BEFORE ALL
TEN JUPPON-
GATANA
ARRIVE.



...FIRST
WE'LL TAKE
ON THE
ENEMY'S
LAST HOPE-
HIMURA
BATTŌSAI.

WE'LL
SLAKE OUR
THIRST
WITH HIS
BLOOD.

TO WORK
OURSELVES
UP FOR THE
CONQUEST
OF JAPAN...



THEN THAT'S
THE REASON
YOU'VE ASKED
US TO WATCH...

...BATTŌSAI'S
MOVEMENTS.

THE TEN
SWORDS ARE
A LEGION OF
ASSASSINS
MARSHALED TO
ASSASSINATE
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS
UPON OUR
REVOLUTION!

I AM
AGAINST
THIS!





...TO
JUST ONE
HITOKIRI!

WE
OF THE TEN
SWORDS AREN'T
GOING TO
LOSE...



AT LEAST WAIT
UNTIL TWO OR
THREE MORE
GET HERE. HŌJI...

...WHAT
DO YOU KNOW
OF BATTŌSAI'S
MOVEMENTS
?



...MY
PRETTY
SWORD, AS
SOON AS
I COULD.

AND I
WANTED
TO SHOW
OFF...

HEH



I JUST
LIVE IN
OSAKA,
YOU
KNOW.

WELL, CHŌ.
THAT WAS
QUICK.

WA

HA

HA



Long time no see. Watsuki here. It's been three months already since the TV anime started. What are your thoughts about it? To my eyes, it turned out better than imagined, so I'm relieved. I'm a tough critic where art's concerned, but I can see it was done with the pride and soul of professionals, so I'm happy. Otherwise, I have issues with some of the timing problems, with the condensing of the script (I can't see Jin-ee's story being only two episodes), and with those off-the-wall, embarrassing subtitles. But I've talked to the director, and I think it'll be improving gradually from here on in. Stay tuned!



DON'T
CAUSE TOO
MUCH
TROUBLE.

IT'S
ALMOST
OUR GREAT
MOMENT.

I
HAD NO
IDEA.

WELL,
WELL...

MM.

FSH

TP

HO.

YOU CAN SEE
HIS EYES
CHANGE WHEN
SWORDS ARE
MENTIONED.

SHISHIO-
SAMA, I AM
STILL
AGAINST
THIS.

HM?

NOW...I AM
GOING TO
WASH OFF MY
SWEAT...
...AND
AWAIT
YOU IN THE
BEDROOM.
SO COME
SOON.

FINE.

...IT
MAY BE
A DISASTER
FOR OUR
GREATER
GOAL.

IF HE AWAKENS
IN THE BATTLE
AGAINST THE
TEN SWORDS,
RECOVERING HIS
STRENGTH FROM
THE PAST...



THOUGH HE
HAS GROWN
WEAK, HIMURA
BATTŌSAI IS
STILL THE
LEGENDARY
HITOKIRI.

AND, IF
THAT'S
THE
CASE...

...AT
LEAST I'LL
HAVE FUN
KILLING THE
TRUE
BATTŌSAI.



PERHAPS.

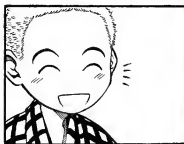
HUH-
HUH-
HUH...

HUH-
HAH-
HAH-
HAH!

I'LL BE
HAPPY
WHICH-
EVER WAY
IT FALLS.

NOT THAT IT
WILL HAPPEN...
NOT WITH
SŌJIRO AND
USUI AMONG
THE TEN
SWORDS.







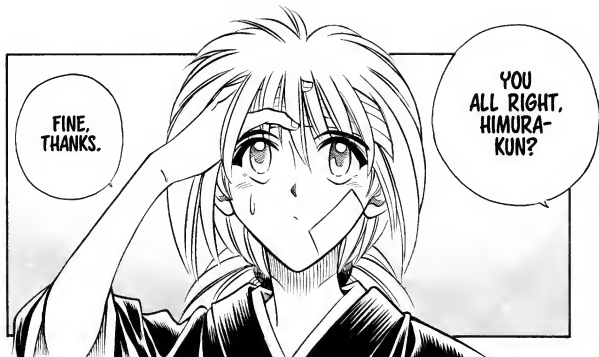
Rurouni Kenshin



Act 77
**Prelude
to Battle**



仲伸
和月



FATHER'S...
LAST
SWORD...?

THE
LAST BLADE
OF ARAI
SHAKKŪ, THE
MASTER
BLADESMITH.

MM. I
HEARD A
LITTLE
SOMETHING
ABOUT
IT.

COULD
YOU LET
ME SEE
IT?



THIS
MAN...
WHERE
DID
HE...?



THE LOCATIONS
OF MOST
OF FATHER'S
SWORDS ARE
UNKNOWN...
AND NONE
REMAIN IN
MY HANDS.

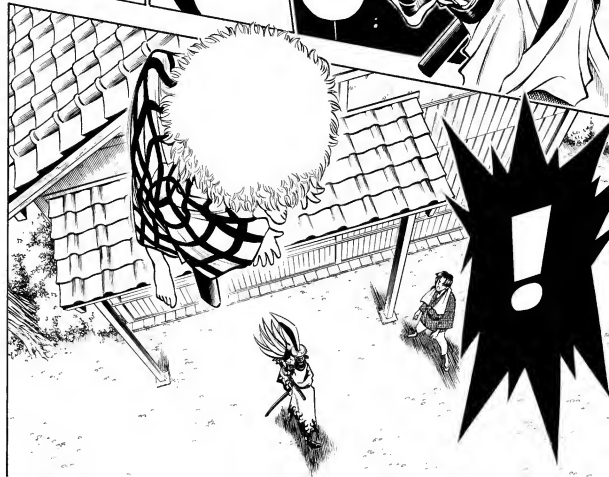
I
HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT
YOU'RE
TALKING
ABOUT.



I...











B...
B...



B
W
A
A
A
H!

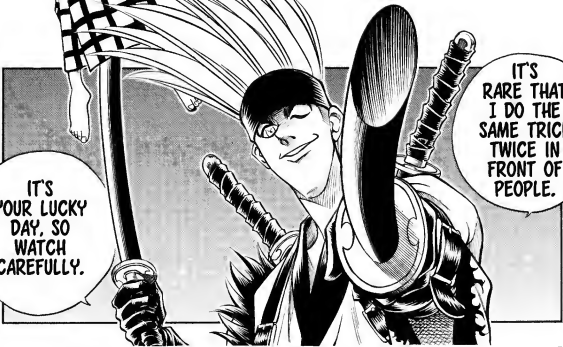
IT'S CALLED
"REVERSE MID-AIR
SHEATHING." NOT
MANY SWORDSMEN
CAN DO IT.

WHAT
DO
YOU
THINK?



MM.





IT'S
YOUR LUCKY
DAY, SO
WATCH
CAREFULLY.

IT'S
RARE THAT
I DO THE
SAME TRICK
TWICE IN
FRONT OF
PEOPLE.

CHK

NOW...

FATHER'S
SWORD ISN'T
HERE!

PLEASE
WAIT!

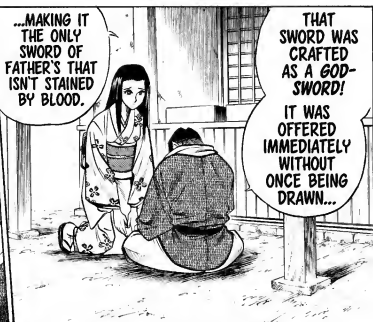
AZUSA
!

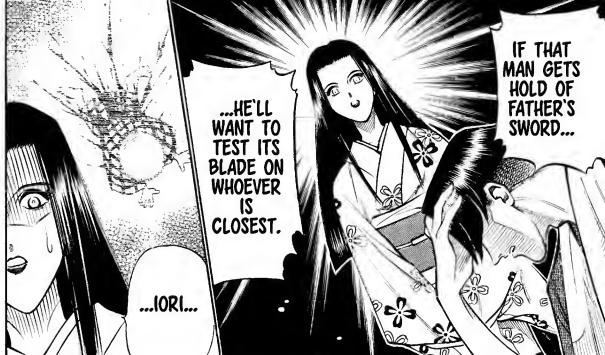
...TO THE
HAKUSAN
SHRINE
AS A GOD-
SWORD!!

HIS
LAST
BLADE
WAS
OFFERED
...









...HE'LL
WANT TO
TEST ITS
BLADE ON
WHOEVER
IS
CLOSEST.

IF THAT
MAN GETS
HOLD OF
FATHER'S
SWORD...

...IORI...



WHY
WON'T THE
WORLD LET
ME BE?!

I QUIT
MAKING
SWORDS TO
SEEK PEACE...



HURRY
!!

JUST
TELL
ME.



YOU'RE...

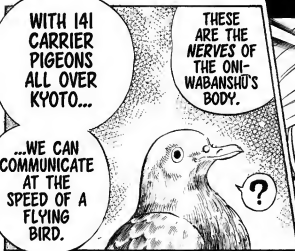
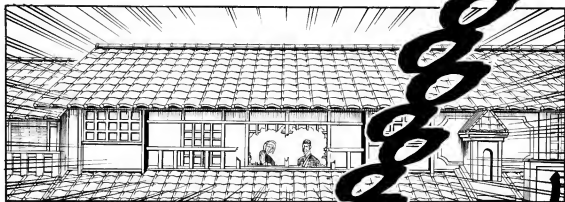


TELL
ME THE
DETAILS.



TK





...WE CAN COMMUNICATE AT THE SPEED OF A FLYING BIRD.

?



YOU'LL
ONLY
BE
KILLED!

YOU WON'T
BE ABLE
TO FIGHT
EVEN IF
YOU GO!

YOUR
SAKABATŌ
IS
BROKEN
AND
USELESS!

HIMURA-
KUN,
STOP!

WH
P

HIMURA-
KUN!!





WHAT
SORT OF
KILLING
MASTER-
PIECE—?

"SHAKKŪ'S
LAST
SWORD."



I'VE
WASTED
TOO MUCH
TIME.

KYOTO'S
ROADS
ARE SO
CONFUSING.



Mwaaaaah





Rurouni Kenshin

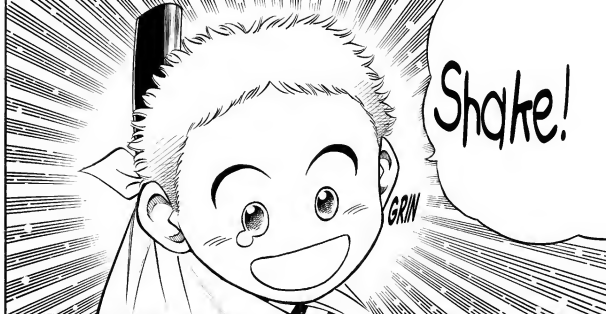


Act 78
Chō
of the
Ten
Swords

YOU'RE
THE FAMOUS
HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI.

A SCAR
LIKE A
CROSS
ON YOUR
LEFT
CHEEK.

仲伸
和月





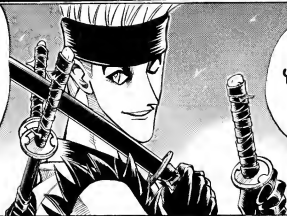
MM.
TRYING
TO AVOID
A FIGHT,
ARE YOU?

TK

I'M NOT
SURPRISED.



BUT LET
THE BOY
GO
FIRST.



...SO
YOU'RE
AFRAID
TO FIGHT
ME.

THE
SAKABATŌ
YOU DEPEND
UPON IS
BROKEN...

...AND
SHISHIO-SAMA
HAS SAID,
WHEN FACING
AN ENEMY...

...I
EITHER
KILL HIM,
OR I DIE.

GNG



WELL, I
DON'T SEE ANY
FUN IN BEATING
SOMEONE
WHO CAN'T
FIGHT BACK...



...



RSSH

I CAN'T
THINK OF
SOMETHING
I'VE WANTED
TO CUT
MORE.



Bwuh.

...HOW
MUCH
FUN WILL
IT BE
WITHOUT
SOMETHING
TO TEST
THE EDGE
ON?

EVEN
WHEN I
DO GET
THE
SWORD...



AND—!



A FAIR
FIGHT,
HUH?

SORRY.
I REJECT
YOUR
DEMAND.

HSH

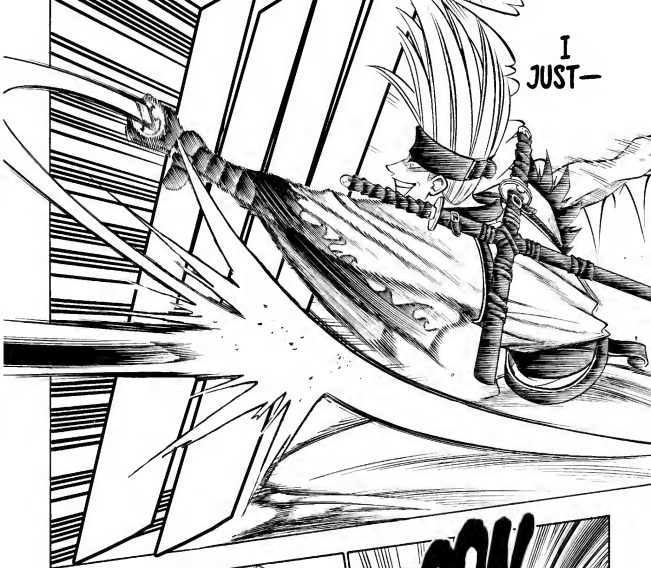
WIN

YOU'RE
A
TWISTED
MAN.

OH,
I'M NOT
SO
TWISTED.

...YOU
TAKE A
HOSTAGE...
AND THAT'S
"FAIR"?

YOU KNOW
OF THE
BROKEN
SWORD...



— HAVE
A
SENSE
OF
HUMOR!

HOON





GOTCHA!

...COME
WITH
SOMETHING
BETTER
THAN
SAITO'S
GATOTSU.

IF YOU
WISH TO
GET IN
WITH A
THRUST...

W
R
R



!

龍
卷
閃

か
ん
せ
ん

RYUKANSEN —
DRAGON
SPIRAL STRIKE

飛
天
御
劍
流

ひ
て
ん
み
や
う
けん
りゅう

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

カ
ン
セ
ン

ヒ
テ
ン
ミ
ヤ
ウ
ケン
リ
ュウ



More on the anime. The first series is almost over, and the second will have original storylines (nothing you've seen in the manga). A lot of people dislike "TV originals," but for Watsuki, it's exciting. What will happen when someone else does *Rurken*? Since the first half of the original storyline was jammed into the first series (I know the producers didn't mean for it to feel that way, but to me that's how it felt—sorry!), I'm looking forward to a way more entertaining second series. That the anime staff put their hearts and souls into the first series was obvious, but the second series will be a much better stage for their talents. I hope they keep giving it their all!

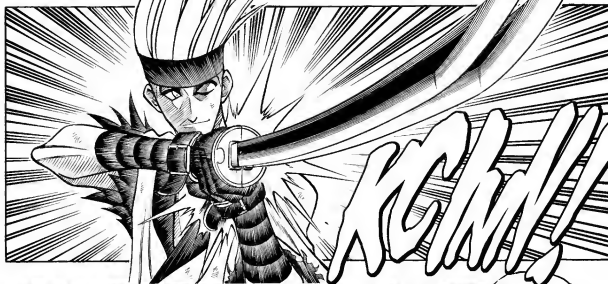
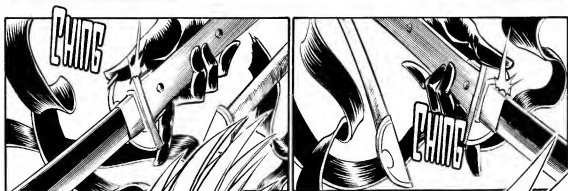
This is sort of off-topic, but I'd like to say something about the difference in voice-actors between the CD books and the anime. As I wrote in Volume 9, I basically had nothing to do with the production of the anime—my schedule and their schedule just conflict too much. The only thing I can really do is give my opinion on decisions already made...and that's how it was with the hiring of the voice-actors. Compared to the CD, the TV production has far more companies involved in it, so an industry power-structure comes into play, and that ultimately resulted in different voice-actors than those used for the CD books.

Personally? I feel sorry for the voice-actors in the CD books.
(To be continued.)



...A
VERY
HIGH
PRICE.

AND
THESE
WEAPONS
OF MINE
BRING...



THIS IS
AN EARLIER
SWORD OF
SHAKU'S...

RENBATŌ—
"REPEATER."

...EVEN IF
I DON'T
HIT A
VITAL
SPOT...

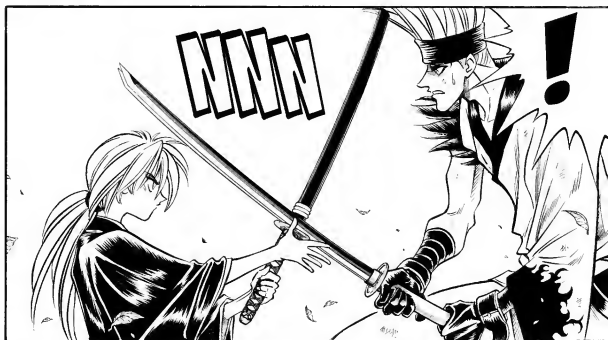
HO!

...I
LEAVE A
WOUND
THAT
FESTERS...

SO...

TWO
WOUNDS
SO CLOSE
TOGETHER
ARE HARD
TO SEW
UP.





龍翔閃

RYŪSHŌSEN—
DRAGON FLIGHT!

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

DRAGON!



MM.
YOU WERE
RIGHT.



Bwuh.

SORRY
TO MAKE
YOU
WAIT.
YOU'LL
BE DOWN
IN A
MOMENT.



SIGH...



...BUT HE
DIDN'T
SEEM
HARMED.

HIS
SUIGETSU*
WAS HIT...



Shake?



SORRY,
IORI.

GRIN

LOOKS
LIKE THIS
WILL TAKE
A BIT
LONGER.



I
GUESS
I'VE
BEEN...

...FOOLING
AROUND
TOO
MUCH.

*A VITAL PRESSURE POINT

**DIS-
RESPECT
ME AND
I'LL
START BY
SLICING
HIM IN
HALF!**

**STOP
TALKING
TO THAT
STUPID
KID AND
LOOK
AT ME!**



IF YOU'D
SHOWN IT
FROM THE
BEGINNING,
I WOULDN'T
HAVE HELD
BACK
EITHER.

HOW CRUEL
TO HAVE
KEPT IT
HIDDEN
SO LONG.

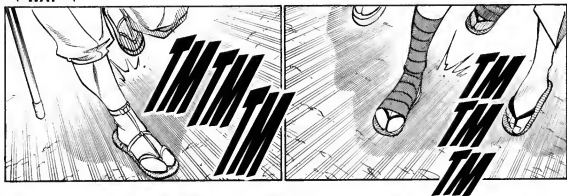
SO, YOU'VE
GOT A
BATTLE-
FACE TOO,
EH?

WASH

CH
K

STEEL
BELTS...

THAT'S
WHAT
STOPPED
THE
RYUSHOSEN.



JUST
HURRY!

WHAT?! HIS
SWORD IS BROKEN!
THAT'S WHY I
WAS DEPENDING
ON YOU!

DON'T
GET
MAD.

YOU MEAN
YOU JUST
GOT
HERE?!

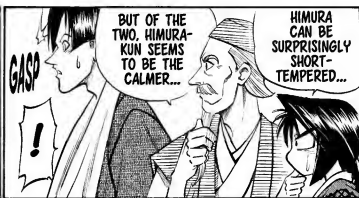
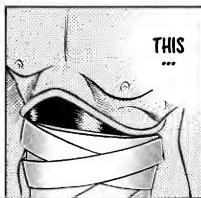
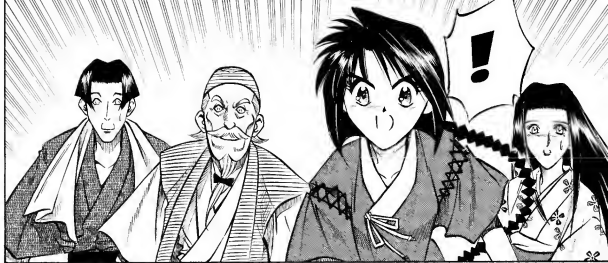
WHAT'S THE
POINT OF THE
STUPID BINDS?!

GRAMPS
!

HE RAN
OUT AS
SOON AS HE
HEARD.

I
COULDN'T
CATCH UP.

WHERE'S
HIMURA
?

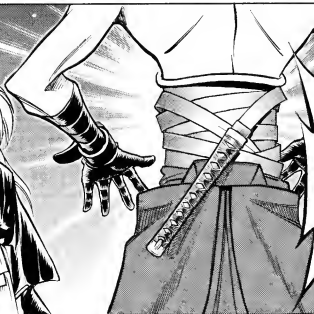


THE
SWORD
HE HAS
AROUND
HIS
WAIST!



...IS
NOT
GOOD!

—BACK
AT THE
PINNACLE
OF HIS
SKILL!!

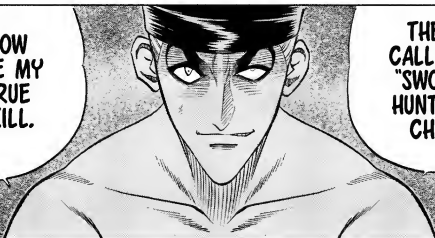


IT'S A
KILLING
SWORD
MY
FATHER
CREATED
IN HIS
LATER
DAYS—

WHAT?!



NOW
SEE MY
TRUE
SKILL.



THEY
CALL ME
"SWORD
HUNTER"
CHŌ.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 79 The Thinnest Blade

...OF THE
GREATEST
SWORD-
SMITH!

THE
PINNACLE
...

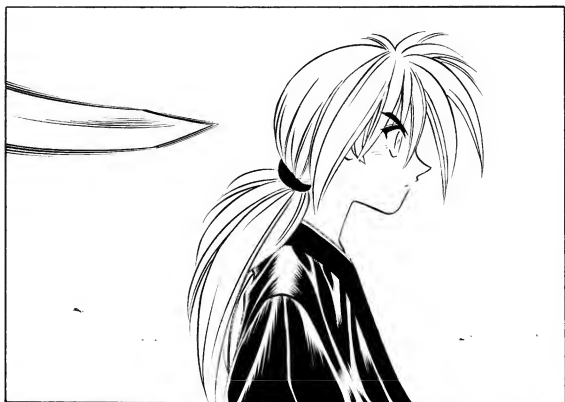
...COME!

HERE
I...

HE'S
STILL
GOT A
SWORD
HIDDEN!

HIMURA,
WATCH
OUT!

SHAH



THIS
IS MY
FAVORITE
SWORD
OF ALL....!

WELL
?!

Act 79

**T
h
e

T
h
i
n
n
e
s
t

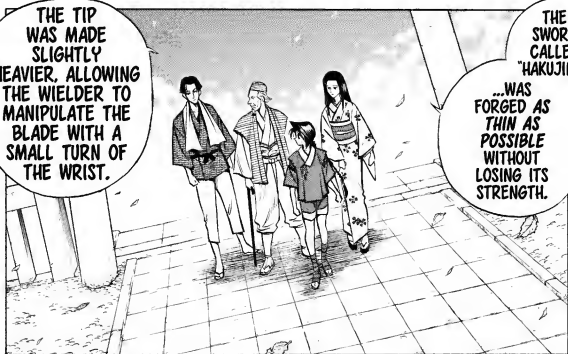
B
l
a
d
e**

"HAKUJIN"—
THE THIN
ONE!

仲
月
宏







◀ READ
THIS
WAY ▶

TAKE
THIS.

"OROCHI"
POSE.

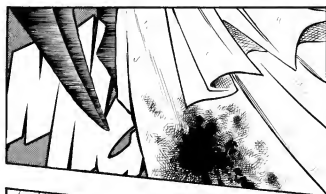
LET'S
GET
TO THE
CLIMAX.

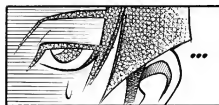
I HAVEN'T
HAD AN
AUDIENCE
IN A LONG
TIME.

PEH









THEN...
IORI
WILL...



I KNEW
IT...HE HAS
NO CHANCE.

LET'S
JUST
SAVE
IORI...

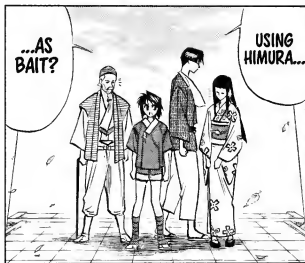
...AND
LEAVE THIS
BATTLEFIELD
AS SOON AS
WE CAN.

...
LET'S
GIVE UP
FATHER'S
SWORD.



...AS
BAIT?

USING
HIMURA...



BUT HE
RUSHED
OVER
HERE
TO
SAVE
THAT
BOY!

HE
KNOWS
HE CAN'T
FIGHT
WITHOUT
HIS
SWORD!



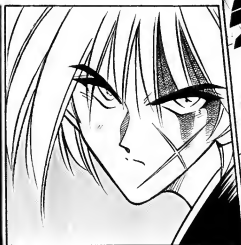
Shake.

THE
ONE WITH
THE OSAKA
DIALECT IS
FOCUSED
ON THE
BATTLE.

THAT'LL
GIVE US
OUR
CHANCE
TO GRAB
IORI!









THE
GAME'S
OVER,
YOU
KNOW.

DON'T
YOU
GET
IT?



THOSE
EYES
ANNOY
ME.



WELL?

WHY
SACRIFICE
YOUR LIFE
FOR ONE
WORTHLESS
CHILD?

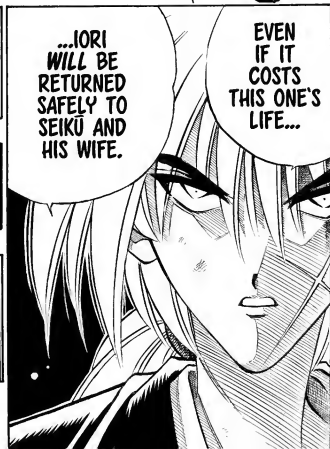
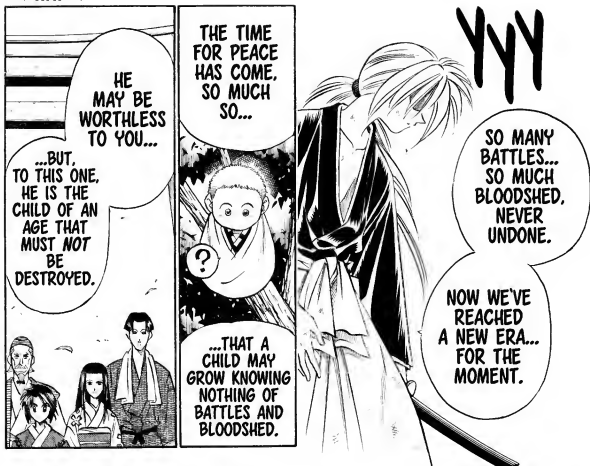


HA!
REMINISCING
ABOUT HIS
PAST GLORY!
THAT IS
PATHETIC!

BRAGGING
NOW?

...IN THE
NAME OF
COUNTRY,
MANY
LIVES WERE
TAKEN.

PM
YEARS
AGO...





THEN GRAB
IORI WHILE
YOU CAN!

WAIT
UNTIL HIS
ATTENTION
IS DRAWN.



ALL RIGHT.
LET'S END
THIS NOW.

I'LL
CREATE A
NEW WORLD—
WITH MY
SWORDS! AND
UNDER SHISHIO-
SAMA. REST
IN PEACE.



...MAKING
ME THE
"BAD GUY."
NOW
I AM
ANNOYED.

YOU
ACT
LIKE
SOME
KIND OF
HERO...



B...
BUT...



DARLING
?





WE'LL
SAVE YOU!
JUST HANG
ON!

HANG
ON,
IORI!

THE
AUDIENCE
ISN'T
ALLOWED
ON
STAGE!

DARLING
!!

**YOU'RE
ALL...
ANNOYING
!!**



**SEIKŪ-
DONO...?**

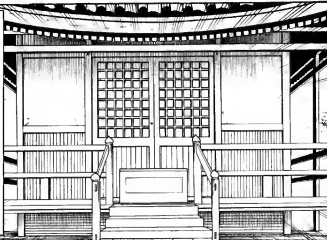


**I TRUST
HIM
WITH IT!**

**TM
TM
TM**

**I'M
BETTING
ON THIS
MAN.**

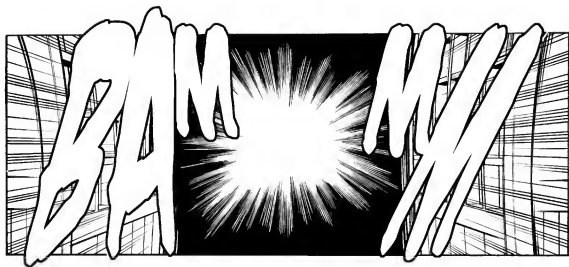
**HE'LL
PROTECT
IORI—
AND THE
NEW
ERA!!**



**THIS MAN
WILL USE
FATHER'S
SWORD
FOR THE
RIGHT
REASONS!**

Rurouni Kenshin





I NEVER
LIKED THOSE
WORDS THAT
FATHER USED
TO SAY.

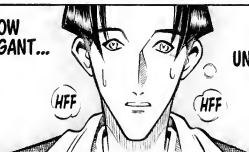


"THE SWORDS
I CRAFT WILL
CREATE A
NEW ERA."

HOW
ARROGANT...

...TO SAY
THAT SWORDS...
WILL CREATE
WORLDS.

HFF

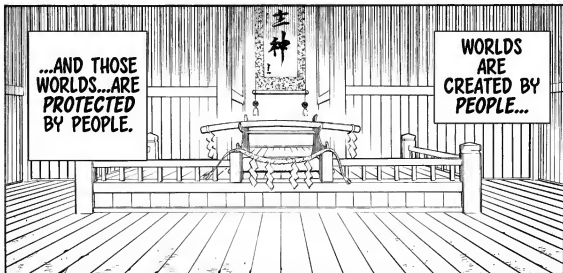


HFF

...I
UNDERSTAND
WHY.

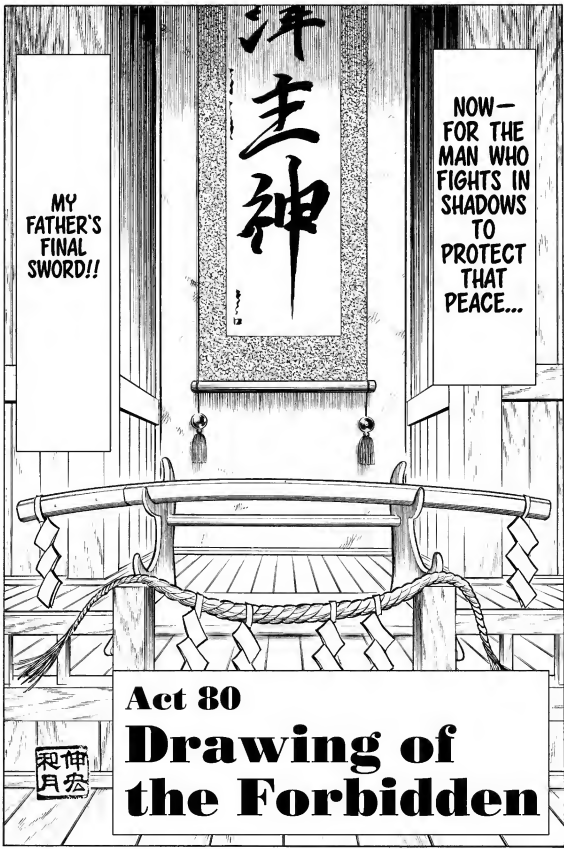
NOW...

...AND THOSE
WORLDS...ARE
PROTECTED
BY PEOPLE.



WORLDS
ARE
CREATED BY
PEOPLE...

Act 80—Drawing of the Forbidden



MY
FATHER'S
FINAL
SWORD!!

NOW—
FOR THE
MAN WHO
FIGHTS IN
SHADOWS
TO
PROTECT
THAT
PEACE...

Act 80

Drawing of the Forbidden

仲伸
和月

MY
RAGE
SOARS!!

I'M NOT
LETTING
YOU GO
NOW!

...THE
"HAIR OF
INSANE
BROOM."

LOOKS
MORE
LIKE...

LOOK
AT
MY
HEAD
!!

NOD!!

NOD

THIS IS
THE "HAIR OF
HEAVENLY
FIRE"!!

Broom!

Broom!



YOU
ARE SO
ANNOYING
!!

IT WAS
A JOKE,
IDIOT!
DON'T
TAKE IT
LITERALLY
!!

HYO0000

HE'S
CHARGING!

IS
THIS
THE
PUNCH
LINE?

HE
BLOCKED
IT...WITH
WHAT'S
LEFT
OF HIS
SHEATH!

KKKKK

READ
THIS
WAY





HENH

I REALLY
SHOULDN'T
TAKE YOU
LIGHTLY.

CLOSE...
CLOSE.

I'LL CUT
YOU TO
PIECES AND
THROW
THEM INTO
THE SHIJŌ
RIVER.

I'LL
SHRED
YOU FROM
THE
OUTSIDE.

IT
DIDN'T
...

NO MORE
ENTERING
YOUR
SPACE.

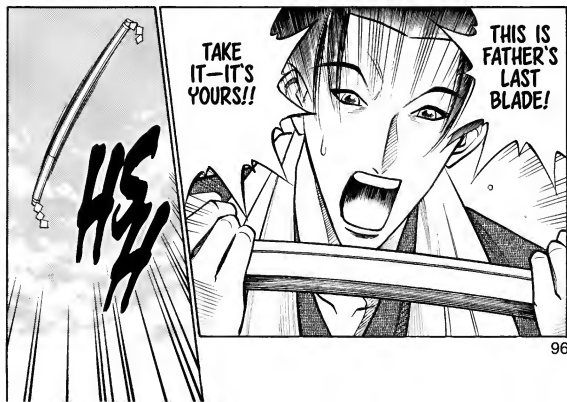
YOU MADE
ALL THE
BLOOD IN
MY HEAD
RECEDE.

...IF
ONLY
HE
HAD A...

...IF...

IF THERE'S A
WAY TO ESCAPE
THE SITUATION
WITH ALL OF US
UNHARMED...

THERE'S NO
HOPE FOR
VICTORY
NOW.







KILL OR
DIE. IT'S
EASIER TO
UNDERSTAND.



BOTH
WITH
SWORDS.



GO, HIMURA!
IT'S YOURS
NOW!



I DON'T
BELIEVE
HE CAN
DO IT.



HUH
...?

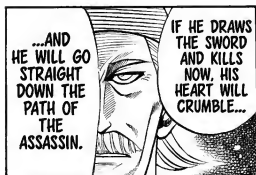
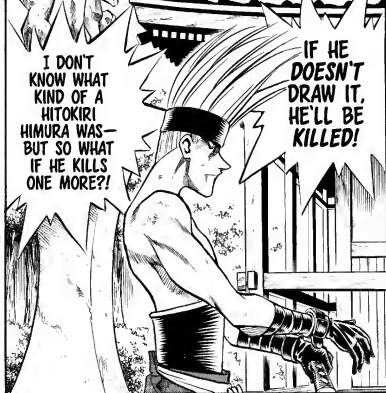


HE...
WILL NOT
DRAW THAT
SWORD.



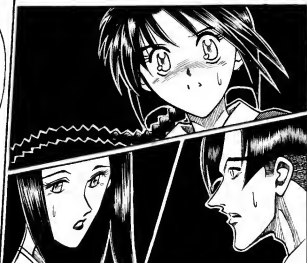
The voice-actors for the CD book were pros, in both name and skill...almost too good for the likes of Watsuki. I was completely ignorant about voice-actors until then, but they showed me so much pride and dedication that I immediately began to respect their craft—and that's what made it disappointing to have had the voice-actors change, especially *Ogata Megumi* as "Kenshin," and *Seki Tomokazu* as "Sanosuke." I thought both were equally well suited to their parts. I had a chance to apologize to Seki-san when we met once during a dinner arranged by a friend of mine. (I'm sorry I wasn't able to make the premiere of "Gekidan Hero, Hero Q." I'll go the next chance I get.) I still haven't had a chance to talk to Ogata-san (please don't bother pointing out that that's to be expected). So, even if it is indirectly, I'll take this opportunity to say it: Ogata-san, I'm very sorry.

Recently I've received quite a few letters of protest, and also letters to the effect, "If (Ogata-san) can't do 'Kenshin,' at least have her do 'Seijirō.'" As far as I'm concerned, though, I'd like her for "Misao." (I thought she'd find a "stubborn girl" more challenging than the "pretty boy" parts she usually gets—though I'm sure she'll have no problem pulling it off.) However it works out, I'd like to see Ogata-san and the rest of the CD book cast get parts in the anime. And, as part of my apology, I'd like them to get parts that are worth playing. Of course, this is merely Watsuki's own, very selfish opinion...



...MADE
OF
METAL...

ONLY IF
THAT SHEATH
WERE NOT OF
WOOD. BUT
LIKE HIS OLD
SHEATH...



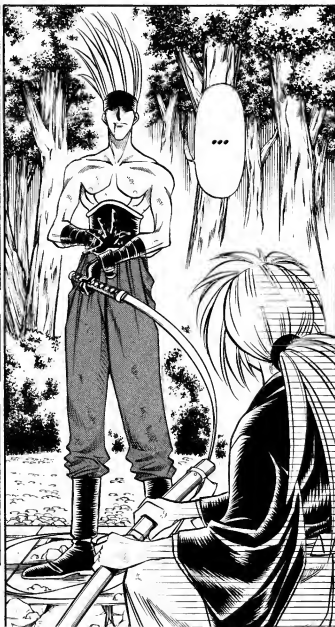
WHY ARE
YOU SO
AFRAID TO
KILL A
MAN?

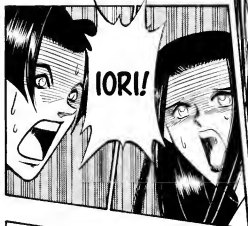
YOU ARE
HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI,
MM?



...I'LL
HELP
YOU TO
REMEMBER
IT...

...ALL RIGHT.
IF YOU'VE
FORGOTTEN
HOW GOOD
IT FEELS
TO KILL...





IORI!

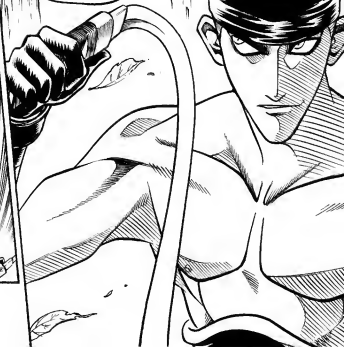


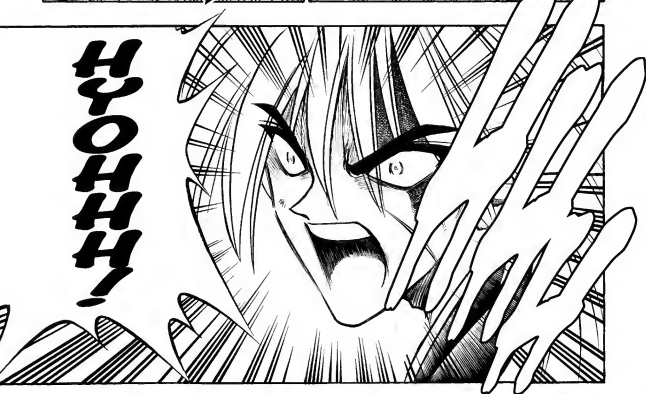
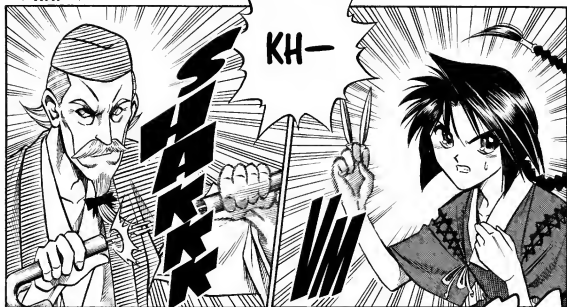
I'LL SLICE
APART YOUR
"CHILD OF
PEACE"
FIRST!



...WITH
A
SMALL...

...DEMONSTRA-
TION.







NOW I'LL
MAKE YOU
PAY...

**YOU
BOUGHT
IT, FOOL!**

**BLAST!
THAT
WAS A
TAUNT!!**

**...FOR
MAKING
A FOOL
OUT OF
ME!**



飛天御剣流

HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

HOHOHO!

RYŪKANSEN
TSUMUJI—
DRAGON FLASH
SPIRAL!

龍卷閃・『旋』

WH...

WHAT
IS
THIS
...?!

HE'S
LIKE A
DIFFERENT
MAN!

HIMURA!



The Secret Life of Characters (29) —Sawagejō Chō—

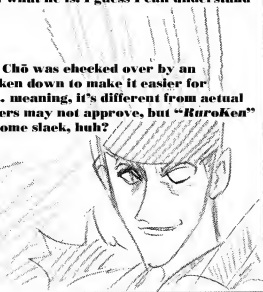
I've no real model for his personality, but if I had to pick one, it would be the public's stereotyped image of people from Kansai. Some of my assistants and mentors are "*Kansaijin*," and they're all fun and good people. Watsuki thinks that, in his next life, he'd like to be reincarnated as one of them. Chō isn't meant to represent Kansai people in reality, so please don't take him as such....

Despite being a villain, he was still very popular (though characters with Osaka dialects are *always* pretty popular). He was fun for me to draw, too, so I thought it was a waste to finish him off here and made him reappear later in the story. (It would be weird for him to become friendly with Kenshin and the others, though, so I've given him a bit more of a neutral position.)

As an aside, sketches of Chō sent in by fans usually have Iori in them, too, which gives me quite a laugh.

As for models in terms of design, the assistants say [*Samurai Shodown's*] "Galford" and readers say *King of Fighters's* "Benimaru," but frankly, they're both wrong. Chō's basic design was created when Watsuki was 20 years old... and was designed to be an alien (really!). That was ultimately rejected, but that horse-headed monkey-face was hard to throw out completely, so I used it this time around. The original design had given him black, messy hair, all swept back—different from the Chō of today—but to give him more impact as the first of the *Juppongatana* assassins, I incorporated a "punk rock" quality, making him what he is. I guess I can understand why people think "Benimaru"....

Incidentally, the Kansai dialect used by Chō was checked over by an assistant from Kansai, but was then broken down to make it easier for everyone all over Japan to understand... meaning, it's different from actual Kansai dialect. Some of my Kansai readers may not approve, but "*RuroKen*" is manga aimed at everyone, so cut me some slack, huh?



Act 81—Shakkū's Wish

HIMURA!





Act 81

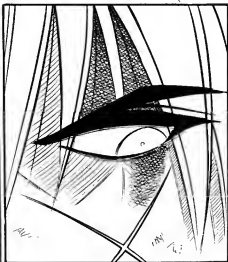
**S
h
a
k
k
ū
'
s**

**W
i
s
h**

仲
月
宏



HE
KILLED
HIM...







A
SAKABATŌ!

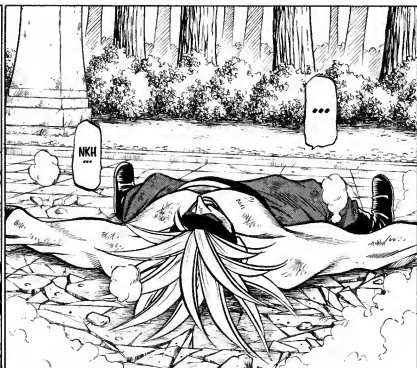
...FITS JUST
SLIGHTLY
BETTER IN THE
PALM THAN THE
LAST ONE.

NO.
THIS
ONE....

WHAT?! ARAI
SHAKKŪ'S LAST
BLADE WAS ALSO
SAKABATŌ—LIKE
THE ONE HE GAVE
HIMURA-KUN?!

BUT...IF
THAT'S
SAKABATŌ,
TOO,
THEN...!





HA
HA
HA

YOU'LL
NEVER
GET T
SHISHIO
SAMA.

JUSTICE!!

WAAAAH!

...PLEASE
DO.

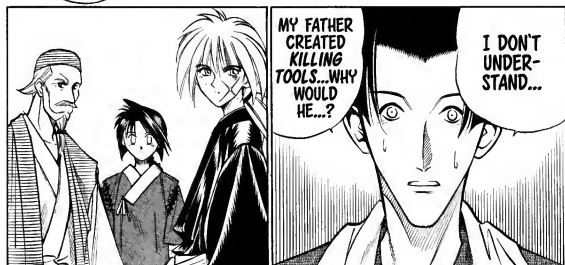
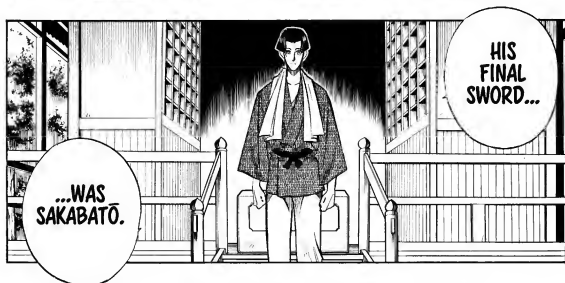
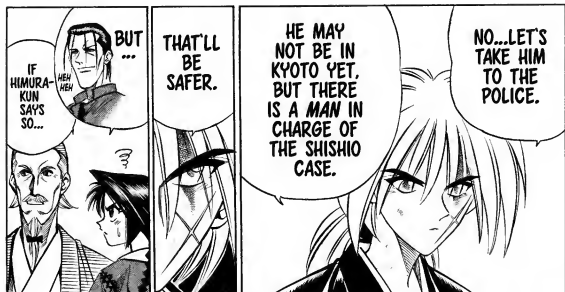
SHOULD
I...?

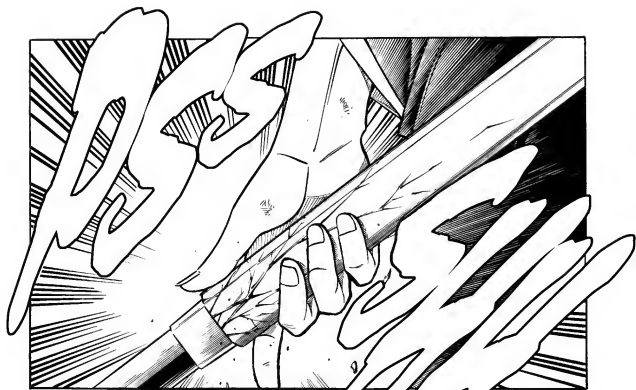
SHOULD I...?

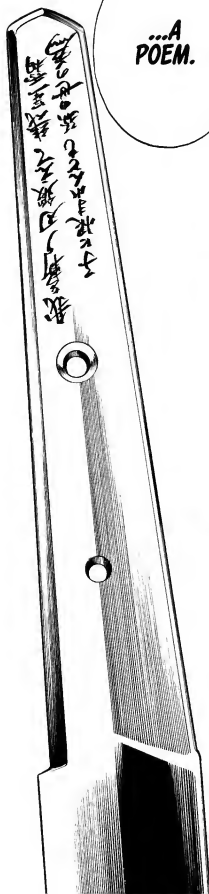
WE STILL NEED INFORMATION, SO LET'S TAKE HIM TO AOI-YA.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH HIM?

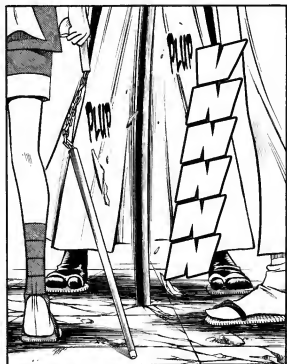
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH HIM?







...A
POEM.



"MY SON
REVILES,
BUT FOR MY
GRANDSON,
I BLEED."

"SLASHING
MYSELF, I
HAVE
TRAINED
COUNTLESS
BLADES."

EVEN IF
IT LED TO HIS
SON REVILING
HIM, IT WAS
FOR THE WORLD
HIS GRANDSON
WOULD LIVE
IN.

HE
SPENT MANY
YEARS CRAFTING
SWORDS, FEELING
HE WAS CUTTING
HIMSELF.

FATHER
MUST
HAVE
REALIZED
...

SHAKKŪ
LEFT THESE
AS HIS
PARTING
WORDS...

...HE WAS
ARROGANT
TO THINK
SWORDS COULD
CREATE
WORLDS.

...ENGRAVED
ON HIS
LAST
SWORD.



AS A
SWORDSMITH
LIVING IN THOSE
DAYS OF BLOOD,
HE KEPT GOING
FORWARD...CRAFTING
SWORD AFTER
SWORD, HOPING TO
SPEED PEACE
ON ITS WAY...

BUT
THEN, HE
LIVED IN THE
CHAOS OF THE
BAKUMATSU.
THERE WAS
NO TIME...

...TO
STOP AND
THINK IN
THE MIDST
OF HELL.



HE
HAD TO
LIVE HIS
LIFE IN
IRONY.

...AGAINST
THE WISHES
OF HIS
OWN HEART.



YES.

"SHINUCHI"
?



MY FATHER,
WITH HIS
DEEP FEELINGS
OF REGRET
AND HOPE,
LEFT THIS
HOLY SWORD—

"SAKABATŌ
SHINUCHI."

READ
THIS
WAY

SO
THERE
WERE TWO
SAKABATŌ
TO BEGIN
WITH...

I
SEE.

THE FINEST
OF THOSE
ARE CALLED
SHINUCHI.
"TRUE FORGE,"
AND ARE
OFFERED TO
THE GOD. THE
REST ARE
KAGEUCHI.
"SHADOW
FORGE," AND
ARE STORED
OR GIVEN
AWAY.

WHEN MAKING
A HOLY
SWORD, SMITHS
USUALLY
FORGE NOT
ONE, BUT
TWO OR MORE
BLADES.

...MEANING,
IT'S
BETTER
THAN THE
ORIGINAL
SAKABATŌ!

...AND
THIS IS
THE
SHINUCHI
...

I THINK
THAT'S WHAT
FATHER
WOULD HAVE
WISHED.

PLEASE
ACCEPT IT,
HIMURA-SAN.

"I HEAR
YOU ARE
LEAVING
THE
REVOLUTION,
HIMURA."

...

"THE
REVOLUTION
HAS FINALLY
STARTED TO
BECOME A
REALITY,
AND YOU
RUN OUT.

"WE'VE
JUST WON
OUR FIRST
BATTLE
AT TOBA-
FUSHIMI.

"AND
WHERE
DO YOU
PLAN TO
GO
WITHOUT
YOUR
SWORD?"

"A WAY WILL
BE FOUND
TO PROTECT
THE PEOPLE
OF THE NEW
AGE...WITHOUT
HAVING
TO KILL."

"KATSURA-
SENSEI* HAS
GIVEN HIS
PERMISSION,
SHAKKU-
DONO.

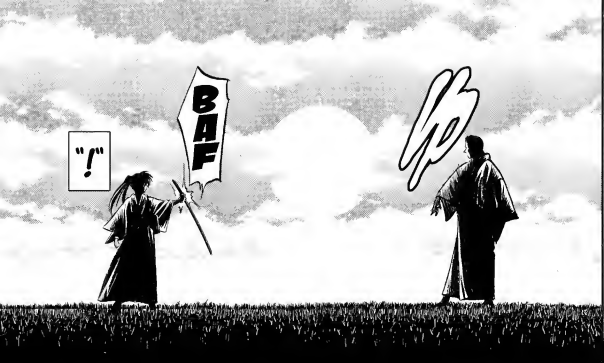
"AFTER ALL
THE MEN
YOU'VE KILLED,
WHY RUN
AWAY NOW?"

"IF
THERE
IS SUCH
A WAY, I'D
LIKE TO
HEAR IT
MYSELF."

"FEH.

"LIVE BY
THE SWORD
AND DIE BY
THE SWORD.
THAT'S THE
ONLY PATH
YOU HAVE."

*"KATSURA KOGORŌ"—ONE OF THE THREE GREATEST
PATRIOTS, AND HEAD OF THE CHŌSHŪ REVOLUTIONISTS.



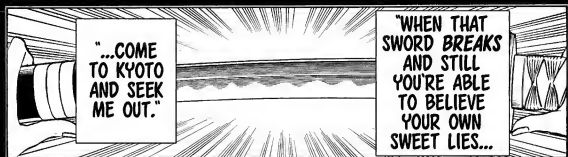
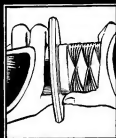
...

"SOON
YOU'LL SEE
HOW NAIVE
YOU'RE
BEING!"

"TRY
BEING A
SWORDSMAN
WITH THAT
AT YOUR
WAIST!"

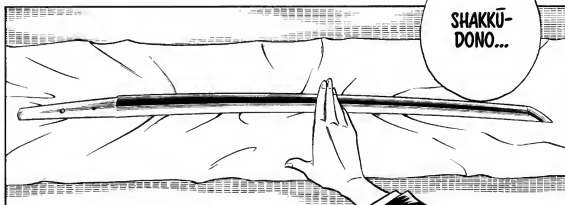
"IT'S A
FAILURE.
BUT FOR
YOU, RIGHT
NOW, IT'S
ENOUGH."

"IT'S A
GIFT."



"...COME
TO KYOTO
AND SEEK
ME OUT."

"WHEN THAT
SWORD BREAKS
AND STILL
YOU'RE ABLE
TO BELIEVE
YOUR OWN
SWEET LIES..."

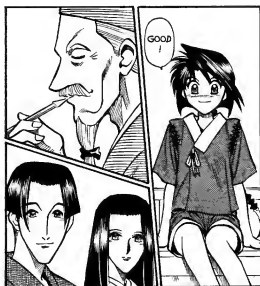


SHAKKŪ-
DONO...

SO...

...TO BELIEVE
THOSE
"SWEET LIES."
JUST LIKE
YOU.

STILL
THIS ONE
WOULD
LIKE...



GOOD!



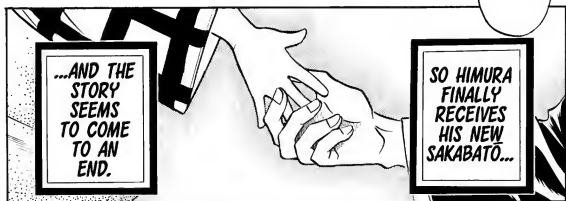
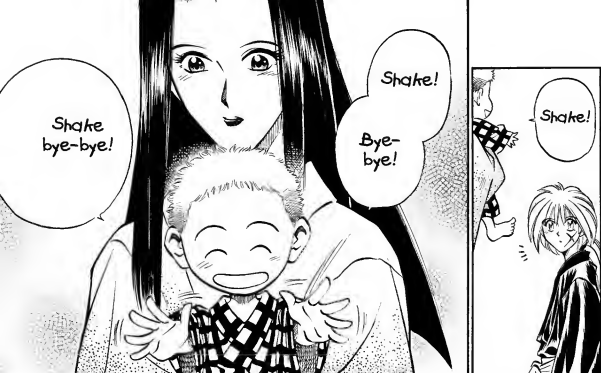
OH YES.
TAKE
CARE.

THEN
WE'LL
BE...



...SAKABATŌ
SHINUCHI...

...THIS ONE
GRATEFULLY
ACCEPTS.



The Secret Life of Characters (30) —Seikū's Family—

Let's see—the family was created with lots of different things in mind but, honestly, I no longer remember too many of them. The murderous end-of-year schedule's made my memory pretty flaky....

As a character who has no history with the revolution, Iori symbolizes peace; Seikū demonstrates the selfishness that fathers can sometimes show; and his wife... uh... holds it all together? (Hey, now.) That's it. Yeah.

The bit about the “holy sword” and the “Sakabatō Shinuchi” is something researched by a novelist friend studying swords, so it's actually true.

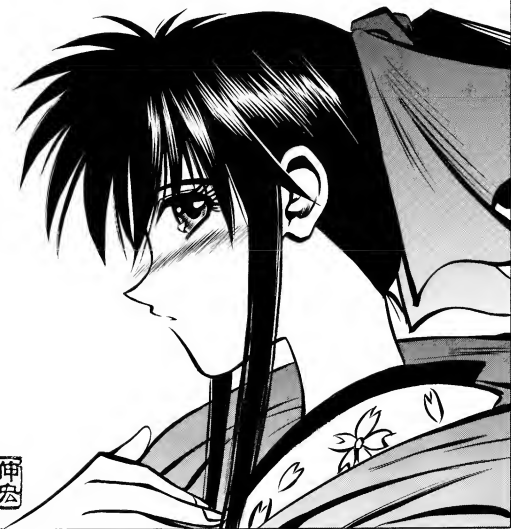
I do plan to bring back Seikū's family in the middle or after the Kyoto Arc, in a story revolving around—not Kenshin!—but Yahiko.

The model in terms of design for Iori was a fairly famous women's manga involving babies; Seikū was made up on-the-spot, as was his wife. “Sakabatō Shinuchi” was originally just a wooden sheath, but it didn't look right, so I went ahead and added those white-paper-streamer-things you see all the time in shrines.

Iori was popular with female readers because he's so cute—especially during the sling-part, where he was hung up on the tree by Chō. Seikū kind of ended up looking like Kanryū—so that didn't turn out quite right—but, with the wife, I also started out by saying “she's not quite right,” and ended up by saying “she's a really good character.” In thinking about it, this is the first female character I've done who shows her entire forehead; I think I found that refreshing. The Shinuchi wouldn't fit Kenshin's fighting style if kept within a wooden sheath—he uses the metal sheaths for fighting—so I changed it back to metal. Of course, the assistants then complained that the wooden one was much easier to draw.



Act 82
Where the
Strings Meet



和伸
月宏



WE'VE ONLY
JUST FOUND
THE NEW
SAKABATŌ
AND GOTTEN
STARTED!

WHY
?



MAY WE
HEAR YOUR
REASONS,
HIMURA-KUN?



CALM
DOWN,
CALM
DOWN.

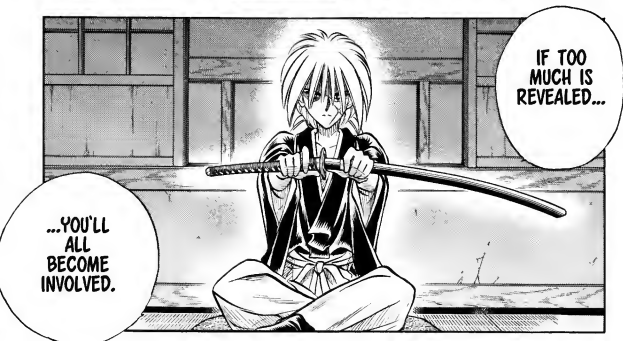
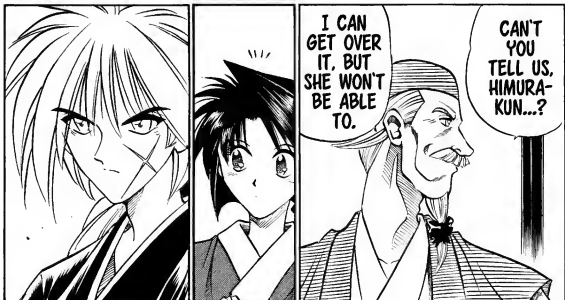


WHY
DON'T
YOU STAY
OUT OF
THIS?

YOU
CAN'T
TELL US,
HUH?!



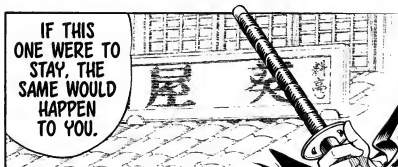




THIS MOST
RECENT
INCIDENT
INVOLVED
SEIKU'S
FAMILY.



IF THIS
ONE WERE TO
STAY, THE
SAME WOULD
HAPPEN
TO YOU.



I GOT
MARTIAL-ARTS
TRAINING FROM
HAN'NYA
HIMSELF!

I'M NOT
A BABY,
LIKE IORI!



PFF!
THAT'S
NOTHING
TO WORRY
ABOUT!!

...MISAO-
DONO
AND IORI
ARE THE
SAME.

TM

TO
SHISHIO
AND HIS
MEN...



**KWEE-
BAM**

YES,
YOU
ARE.





NO ONE
ELSE MUST
BE PUT IN
DANGER.

FROM
HERE ON,
THIS ONE
BATTLES
ALONE.

THANK
YOU.

ONCE WE
LEARN MORE
OF HIKO SEIJURŌ,
I'LL INFORM YOU
USING A SIGNAL
FIRE.

IT'S
AN OLD
METHOD,
BUT IT
WORKS.

WE WILL
RESPECT
YOUR
WISHES.

I
UNDER-
STAND,
HIMURA-
KUN.

IS IT
BECAUSE WE
KNOW YOU'RE
HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI?



I'M NOT THE
TYPE TO CARE
ABOUT PEOPLE'S
PASTS.



HEY,
HIMURA.

WHY
SO
DISTANT,
ALL
OF A
SUDDEN
?

...BUT
JUST THE
RUROUNI,
HIMURA.



WHOEVER
YOU ARE,
THE MAN I
MET WASN'T
HITOKIRI...



SOMEONE
LEFT BEHIND
IN TOKYO
SAID THE
VERY SAME
THING.



WHAT'S
SO
FUNNY
?!

GROWL

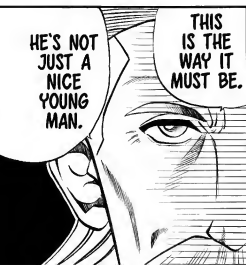
HEH
HEH



TO HEAR
IT AGAIN,
HERE IN KYOTO,
WAS NOT...
EXPECTED.



THIS
ONE IS
SORRY NOT
TO TELL
YOU MORE
OF AOSHI.



HE'S NOT
JUST A
NICE
YOUNG
MAN.

THIS
IS THE
WAY IT
MUST BE.



WHO
NEEDS YOUR
HELP? I'LL
FIND HIM
MYSELF.

...



THE
BATTLE
BETWEEN
HIMURA AND
SHISHIO'S
MEN CAN
ONLY GROW
MORE
FIERCE.

WE SAW
YESTERDAY
THAT, DEEP
IN HIS
SOUL, HE
HAS THE
FIRE OF AN
ASSASSIN.



...YOU
CAN NEVER
BE SAFE.

IF YOU
KEEP STICKING
YOUR HEAD
IN WITH TALK
OF JUSTICE,
AND FRIEND-
SHIPS...



HEY,
HIMURA
!!



SO LET'S
JUST FIND
SEIJURŌ,
AND...



...JUST
'CAUSE
YOU
WOULDN'T
ASK FOR
HELP!

I WON'T
LET YOU
GET AWAY
WITH BEING
MISERABLE...

THE SAME
THING
GOES FOR
YOU, TOO!

YOU TOLD
EIJI FROM
SHINGETSU
VILLAGE,
"BE HAPPY."

-IDIOT!!

AND
DON'T YOU
FORGET
IT -

Seems I've been apologizing a lot lately, so this time I'll tell a stupid story about games, instead. I bought "Samurai Spirits: Zankurō Musōken," and it's good, but to be honest, I can't really get into it. It's more hardcore Japanese style than "Shin · Samurai Spirits," and I do like new characters such as Headhunter Basara, but here's the thing...

The huge gap between the abilities of different characters... the cruel, evil combos that go on unnecessarily... and, most of all, the incredible strength of the CPU! In Level 1 "Swordsman" mode, if you let down your guard for a minute, you're finished! I can only think it's an attempt to weed out the no-good players like Watsuki... I'm really disappointed, since I do like the "Samurai Spirits" games. I'm keeping my hopes up for the "Samurai Spirits" RPG, and for the fourth version of the game. Right now, what I'm hooked on is "Vampire Hunter." Straight out, it's awesome, especially the ability to set levels to allow beginners to enjoy the game. Arcade games aside, I think home-platform games should all be made that way. Watsuki's current character of choice is Morrigan (heh). Until lately, I haven't been the female-character type—and that "dynamite body" of hers doesn't really do it for me—but somehow, she's still my favorite. I especially like the face she makes when she takes a knock-over hit. I've been thinking I should start checking out 3-D fighting games soon, but Watsuki guesses maybe he'll keep messing around in the 2-D world a while longer.



**JUST AS
A HITOKIRI
DURING THE
BAKUMATSU
LIVED...**

**AND SO KENSHIN
RESUMES HIS
SOLITUDE, AND
BEGINS LIVING
IN THE
SHADOWS, AWAY
FROM PEOPLE'S
EYES.**

IT'S BEEN
THREE DAYS
AND YOU'RE
STILL
THINKING
ABOUT IT?

I GET
WHAT HE'S
SAYING,
BUT...

IT'S
JUST NOT
RIGHT.

THE BAD
GUYS HAVE
A HUGE GANG—
SHOULDN'T WE
ALL BAND
TOGETHER?!

RMM...

HE
DOESN'T
HAVE
TO
FIGHT
ALONE.

ALL JOKES
ASIDE, NOTHING
WILL GET DONE
BY STAYING
HOME AND
BROODING.

WHY
DON'T YOU
GO OUT
FOR LUNCH
FOR A
CHANGE?

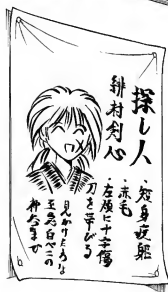


I'M
SORRY.
THAT WAS
RUDE.







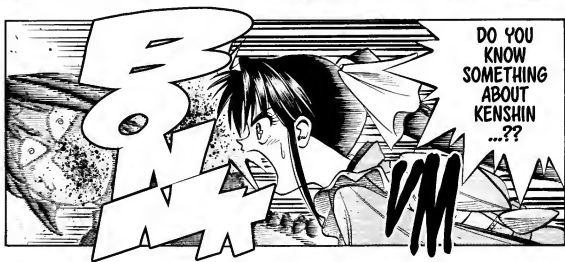


HAVE YOU SEEN HIMURA KENSHIN? SHORT, THIN, RED HAIR. CROSS-SHAPED SCAR ON LEFT CHEEK. CARRIES A SWORD. PLEASE REPORT TO SHIROBEKO.





HIMURA!!



DO YOU
KNOW
SOMETHING
ABOUT
KENSIN
...??



CALM
DOWN!
CALM
DOWN!

○
×
△
☞



[illegible]

**W
S
M
M
H**

Rurouni Kenshin





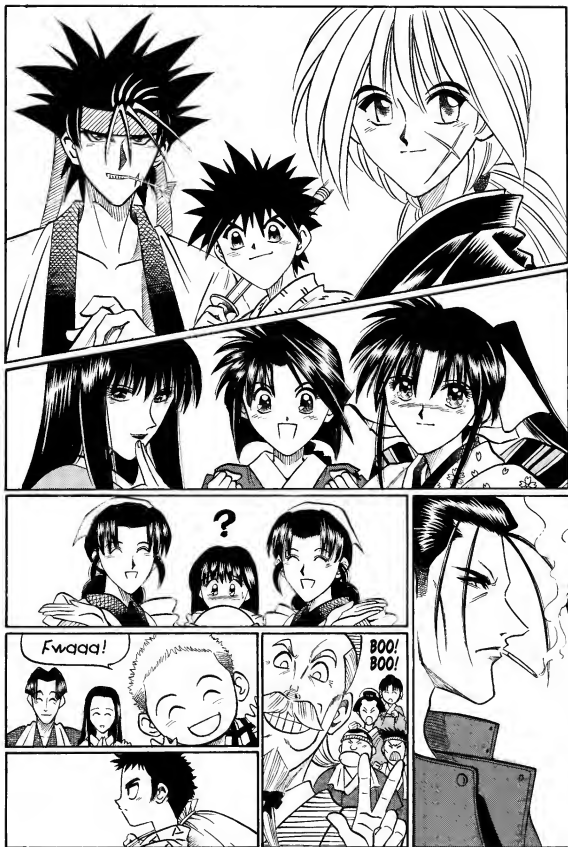
Act 83—Hiko Seijūrō

QUITE
RARE
THESE
DAYS.

A
SIGNAL
FIRE.

WELL, IT
DOESN'T
CONCERN
ME...

W
M
F
F

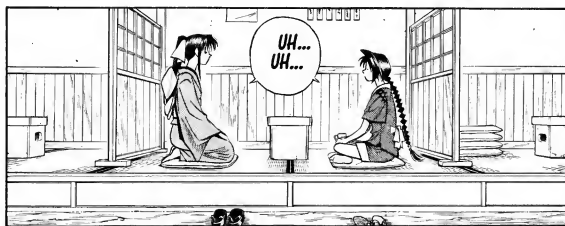




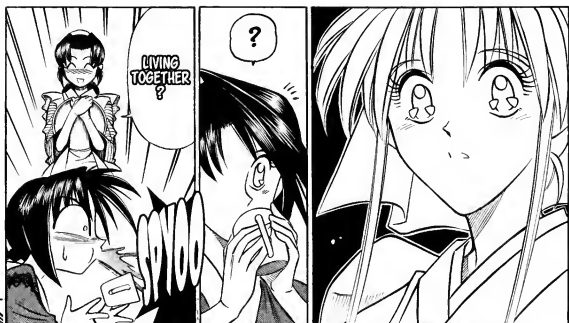
Act 83

Hiko Seijūrō









WE
TRAVELED
TOGETHER
ON THE ROAD
TO KYOTO SO
HE JUST
STAYED AT
MY HOUSE!

**FIDGET
FIDGET**

**NO
!!**

NOT
"LIVING"
LIKE
THAT!

**WAVE
WAVE**



THE
MAN I
LOVE IS
AOSHI-
SAMA!

IT
CAN'T
BE!

THE WOMEN
ARE FLOCKING
TO HIM, AS
USUAL.

THE
HUMAN
MAGNET!

HIMURA IS
JUST A
FRIEND.

In a "Secret Life of Characters" section, I wrote that I got lots of complaint letters about Misao and Saitō—and then received support letters in response. I got more back when I was whining in Volume 5 (though there were negatives mixed in—saying stuff like, "Quit whining and write something interesting" or "If you can't uphold your own standards, why not quit?").

When so many people cared about me when I whined, I felt a little happier... and, at the same time, felt accountable to those people in my work. The worsening of my "murderous" schedule, and the increased number of fan letters has created a huge lag between the time each letter arrives and when it's read, but with that as my incentive, I'll work hard on "RuroKen." See you next volume!



THIS IS
HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ'S
LOCATION.

SS

SORRY ABOUT
THAT. OF
COURSE YOU
WOULDN'T
KNOW.



WE HAD
NO IDEA
"HIKO SEIJURŌ"
WAS AN
ALIAS, SO IT
TOOK A WHILE
TO DISCOVER.



AH...

...BUT
COULD YOU
LOOK AFTER
MISAO AND
AOSHI, AS
WELL?



AND NOT
ONLY
APOLOGIES
...



WELL,
THEN...



I'LL
TAKE
CARE
OF IT.

LEAVE
IT
TO
ME.



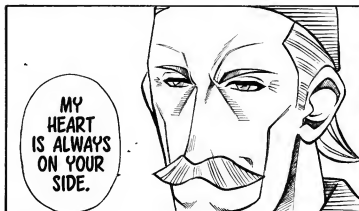


I
APOLOGIZE
TOO,
HIMURA-
KUN.



I
THINK
THAT I
DO.

I'VE TOLD
SEIKU TO
TRY AND
UNDERSTAND
YOUR FEELINGS.



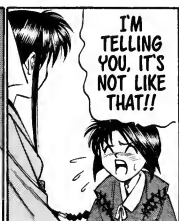
MY
HEART
IS ALWAYS
ON YOUR
SIDE.



IN THE
NORMAL
SCHEME
OF THINGS,
I'D HAVE
WANTED
TO BE AN
ASSET TO
YOU...

...BUT
MY FIRST
DUTY IS TO
PROTECT
AOI-YA AND
MISAO.





**I'M
GOING
TO FIND
KENSIN
NO
MATTER
WHAT IT
TAKES—**

**HE
MAKES
ME SO
MAD!!**



**NOW
SPILL IT!
WHERE DID
KENSIN
GO?!**

**—AND
I'M
GONNA
BELT
HIM!!**



**...SHE
WON'T EVEN
LISTEN
TO ME!!**

**SHE'S
A
CRAZY
PERSON
!**

**NOT
ONLY
WON'T SHE
BELIEVE
ME...**





HEH

SHE'S
FINALLY
HERSELF
AGAIN.



SHE'S
BEEN
DEPRESSED
FOR
WEEKS.

ABOUT
TIME.



FIRE?

SO,
SAE-CHAN,
DID YOU
SEE THAT
FIRE?



THEY
HAVING A
FESTIVAL
SOMEWHERE
?

A SIGNAL
FIRE. I
WONDER
WHAT IT WAS
ABOUT.



SIGNAL
FIRE...!



A BIT
ROWDY
TODAY,
EH?

OH.
WELCOME
-!





DO YOU
STILL WANT
TO SEE
HIMURA?



...TO
FIND ONE
MAN...ON
A STUPID
WHIM?

...WOULD
I TRAVEL
FROM
TOKYO
TO
KYOTO...

LISTEN
...

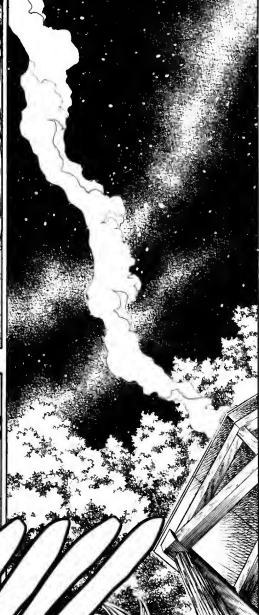
...I
GUESS
NOT.

HEH

FOLLOW
ME!

I'LL
SHOW
YOU
WHERE
HIMURA
IS!!







ZP!



...TO
SWING
AT A
MERE
POTTER.

YOU
ARE
QUITE
A RUDE
MAN...

THANKS



OH.
IT'S
YOU.



"HIKO SEIJŪRŌ"
IS NO
MERE
POTTER.

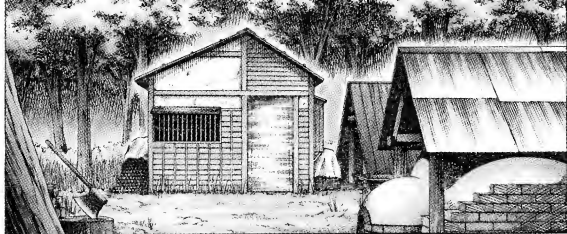
KEEN



IT'S
BEEN A
LONG
TIME...

...MASTER.



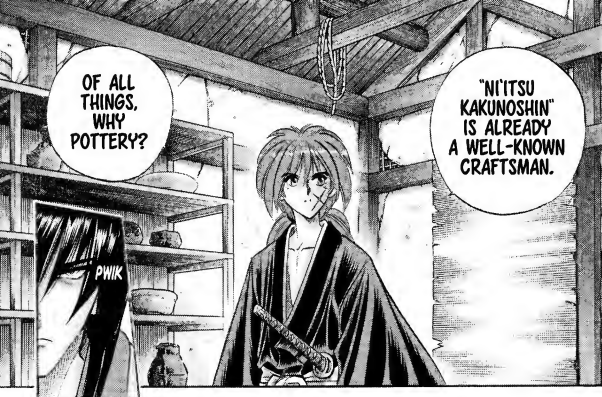


Act 84—The Mitsurugi Apprenticeship



WHAT
BUSINESS
DO YOU
HAVE WITH
ME?

COMING
BACK AFTER
WHAT WE'VE
BEEN
THROUGH?



OF ALL
THINGS,
WHY
POTTERY?

"NI'ITSU
KAKUNOSHIN"
IS ALREADY
A WELL-KNOWN
CRAFTSMAN.

PWIK

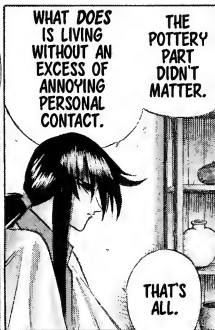


CONCEITED
AS
USUAL...

TRUE GENIUS
SHOWS
IN ANY
GUISE.

...IT
WAS
THAT
EASY?

MM.



WHAT DOES
IS LIVING
WITHOUT AN
EXCESS OF
ANNOYING
PERSONAL
CONTACT.

THE
POTTERY
PART
DIDN'T
MATTER.

THAT'S
ALL.



YOU'VE
COME FOR
SOMETHING
HARD FOR YOU
TO SPEAK OF.

YOU
DODGED MY
QUESTION.



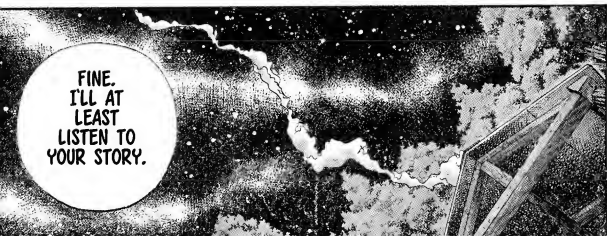
I CAN
READ MY
STUPID
APPRENTICE'S
MIND WITH
EASE.

I'M
YOUR
MASTER.

GRIN



READ
THIS
WAY



Act 84

**The
Apprenticeship**





YOU'RE
RIGHT.

LET'S
HURRY!



THE
SUN'S
ALREADY
DOWN.



UH-
HUH.



IT'S
VERY CLOSE,
ACCORDING
TO GRAMPS.



UM...

...HIMURA'S
ALREADY
LEFT?!



SO, THIS
NI'ITSU
KAKUNOSHIN
THAT HIMURA
WENT TO
SEE—

—IS
SOME NEW
POTTERY ARTIST
EVERYONE'S
TALKING
ABOUT.

ALL
RIGHT...
BUT BE
CAREFUL.

A NAME
OR TITLE KEPT
SECRET, SO
THE PUBLIC
DOESN'T FIND
OUT.

ALIAS?

BUT HE'S
ACTUALLY
A HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
SWORDSMAN
LIVING UNDER
THE ALIAS "HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ"...

HIMURA'S
MASTER.

"HIKO SEIJŪRŌ"
WAS THE NAME
OF THE FOUNDER
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...

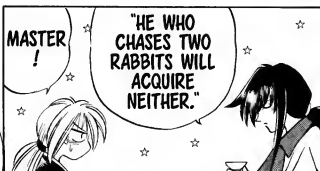
...SO
THE NAME IS
PASSED DOWN
TO EVERYONE WHO
MASTERS THE
WHOLE STYLE.

SO
THEN...

UH-
HUH.









"SWORDS
ARE WEAPONS.
THE WAY OF
SWORDS IS
THE WAY
TO KILL."

"HOWEVER
YOU DRESS
IT UP IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS,
KILLING IS
YOUR TRUTH."



YOUR
NAIVE
IDEALS...

...AND THE
NECESSITY
OF THE
MOMENT.

IT'S BOTH
SELFISH AND
FOOLISH TO
THINK YOU
CAN HAVE
BOTH.



...THAT
15
YEARS
AGO...



IT
SEEMS
...



YOU
NEED NOT
CONCERN YOUR-
SELF ABOUT THE
OUTSIDE WORLD.
YOU MUST
KEEP
TRAINING.

BUT SO
MANY ARE
BEING
KILLED AS
WE SPEAK!



WHEN DO
WE USE
OUR SWORDS,
IF NOT
NOW?

DOESNT
HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYU TEACH US
TO PROTECT
FROM
SUFFERING?



IF YOU
MUST GO,
GO...

MASTER
!!

...BUT
FIRST,
DEFEAT
ME.



"...THROWING
YOURSELF
INTO THE
CHAOS THAT
WAS THE
BAKUMATSU...

"...WAS
A HUGE
MISTAKE."

NO.

MASTER
!



**YOU
HIT ME...
YOU REALLY
HIT ME!**

**BECAUSE
YOU
WON'T
GET IT!**

**BLUP
BLUP**



NO!

**NOW
DO YOU
GET IT?!**



**WHATEVER
REASONS
YOU MAY
HAVE, THEY
MUSTN'T BE
ABANDONED!!**

**THE
PEOPLE
ARE
SUFFERING!
THEY'RE
AFRAID!**



**YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO DOESN'T
GET IT! HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYU WILL
BRING VICTORY
TO WHATEVER
SIDE WE
AID.**

**IT IS
THE "BLACK
SHIP
OF THE
LAND"!!**



...IS
THE
RESULT.

AND
THIS...



SS...



...WE
FOUGHT ALL
DAY AFTER
THAT. FINALLY,
WE WENT
OUR SEPARATE
WAYS.

...RECEIVED A WOUND,
ON HIS CHEEK, THAT
WILL NEVER HEAL. HIS
SOUL, WAVERING
BETWEEN THE
COLDNESS OF THE
HITOKIRI AND HIS
VOW NOT TO KILL...



THOUGH SUPERB
IN WIELDING THE
SWORD, STILL HE WAS
ONLY 14 YEARS OLD
AND EMOTIONALLY
IMMATURE.
MY STUPID
APPRENTICE...

...INTO A
PHANTOM
OF THE
BAKUMATSU.



...IN THE
END, MADE
THIS MAN,
SHISHIO
MAKOTO...

BUT, AT THE
SAME TIME, IN
ORDER TO HIDE
ALL THE VENAL
ACTS THAT HAD
BEEN COMMITTED,
THEY TRIED TO
BURY THOSE WHO
EMBARRASSED
THEM.

THE
REVOLUTIONARIES
YOU AIDED,
BELIEVING IN
JUSTICE, QUELLED
THE CHAOS AND
BUILT THE MEIJI
GOVERNMENT.



"...IN
SHISHIO,
WHO MAY
LEAD US
INTO YET
ANOTHER
ERA OF
CHAOS."

"ALL THE
SUPPRESSED
EVIL OF
THE OLD
DAYS ARE
EMBODIED..."



...PLAYED
A PART IN
THE CREATION
OF THAT
PHANTOM.

YOU, WITH
YOUR ONLY
PARTIAL
KNOWLEDGE
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ...





BUT IT
MUST BE
DONE
WITHOUT
SIDING
WITH ANY
POWERS OR
PARTIES!
YOU MUST
REMAIN
A FREE
SWORD!

JUST AS
YOU HAVE
SAID, THE
TRUEST
MISSION OF
HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
IS TO
PROTECT
PEOPLE FROM
SUFFERING!

YOU, WHO
NEVER
UNDERSTOOD
THIS...

...DO NOT
DESERVE TO
LEARN HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ'S
SECRET.

THAT IS
WHY EACH
GENERATION
OF INHERITORS
HAS KEPT "HIKO
SEIJŪRŌ" AS
ITS ALIAS
FOR 300
YEARS! TO
REMAIN
INDEPENDENT!

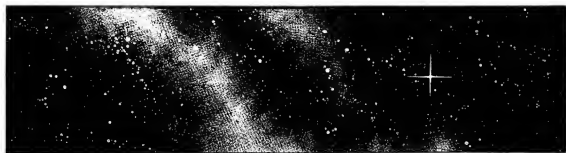
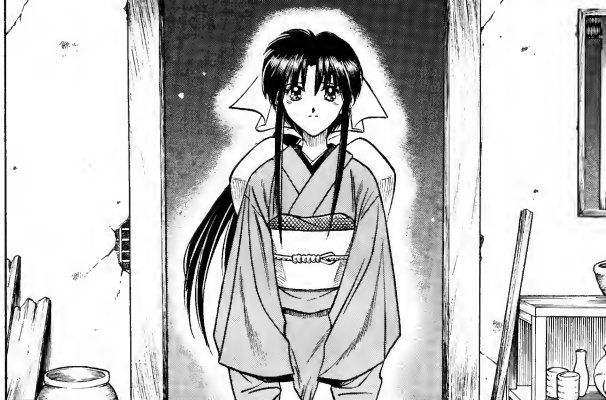
IF YOU
ARE NOT
FREE, YOUR
POWER WILL
DISTORT
HUMAN
AFFAIRS.





WHAT WAS
THAT YOU
JUST SAID?!





To Be Continued in Volume 11: Overture to Destruction

Rurouni Kenshin



GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin*’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s *Juppongatana* are literally that—the ten “swords” or generals he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

Kamiya Kasshin-ryū

Sword-arts or *kenjutsu* school established by Kaoru’s father, who rejected the ethics of *Satsujin-ken* for *Katsujin-ken*

katana

Traditional Japanese longsword (curved, single-edge, worn cutting-edge up) of the samurai. Used primarily for slashing; can be wielded either one- or two-handed.

Katsujin-ken

“Swords that give life”; the sword-arts style developed over ten years by Kaoru’s father and founding principle of *Kamiya Kasshin-ryū*

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

dojo

Martial arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

“Gojaru!”

Rendered in the English version as “shake, shake,” in Japanese one thing Baby lori says over and over is “gojaru”—his version of “degozaru,” the polite, humble verb that is Kenshin’s trademark. Thus, when lori in the Japanese version says “gojaru,” what he’s really saying is: “Kenshin!”

Himura Battōsai

Swordsman of legendary skills and former assassin (*hitokiri*) of the *Ishin Shishi*

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

sakabatô

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice-versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. Even more respectful than **-dono**. Used to show extreme respect—and when used in reference to Shishio—extreme fear.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of “Mr.,” “Ms.,” “Miss,” etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as “**-san**”).

Satsujin-ken

“Swords that give death”; a style of swordsmanship rejected by Kaoru’s father

Shinsengumi

“True to the old ways and risking their lives to preserve the old shôgunate system,” the popular view of the **Shinsengumi** (“newly elected group”) was that of swordsmen as charismatic as they were skilled. Of note: Thanks to the popularity of the NHK drama of the same name, several historical sites in Japan are reportedly enjoying record attendance levels of late.

shôgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shôgunate

See **Tokugawa Bakufu**

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of “**Edo**” to “**Tokyo**” is a marker of the start of the **Meiji Restoration**

Wolves of Mibu

Nickname for the **Shinsengumi**, so called because of the town (Mibu) where they were first stationed

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of **Himura Kenshin**

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword arts; **kendô**

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you’re more likely to find in **Rurouni Kenshin**—is the “superior-to-inferior” form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

kunoichi

Female ninja. In that they are not referred to as simply “**onmitsu**” (ninja), their special name suggests their relative scarcity.

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; **Ishin Shishi**

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the **Tokugawa Bakufu** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for “culture and enlightenment.”

patriots

Another term for **Ishin Shishi**... and when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

ryûshôsen

Sometimes translated as “Soaring Dragon Flash,” the **ryûshôsen** of Kenshin’s Hiten Mitsurugi school is one of his special moves, and is also known as “Dragon Flight”

ryûkansen

Also translatable as “Winding Dragon Flash,” Kenshin’s Hiten Mitsurugi school special move **ryûkansen** is given in here as “Dragon Spiral Strike”